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US-Soviet Relations Over the Next Several Months

- The Gromyko meeting and UN session take place against a backdrop of a frozen Soviet foreign policy.
  - The USSR faces continued poor relations with China; is failing to achieve its objectives in Afghanistan; its relations with Western Europe are poor (and they have managed to anger all Germans); a number of their Third World allies are in trouble; and they continue to bear the onus for walking out of START and INF.
  - Caught up again in a succession crisis, they appear to lack the creativity, energy or wit to get themselves out of any of these boxes.
- Although for public relations it is wise to down play the meeting with Gromyko, it is of special importance. It offers the President an important opportunity to communicate to all the Soviet leaders about what he believes the next several years ought to look like in US-Soviet relations.
- The President should use the meeting with Gromyko and his session at the UN to lay out an essentially positive approach. With Gromyko, he should:
  - Review problems the US has had with the Soviet Union, noting that many of these predate his inauguration. This would provide an opportunity to repeat some of the markers such as MIGs in Nicaragua, etc.
  - The main thrust, however, of the President's presentation would focus on the future and particularly arms control. The President would advise Gromyko that for sensible and stabilizing arms control offensive and defensive strategic systems inevitably must be discussed together. In that connection, the President would acknowledge that from the US standpoint all weapon systems (offensive and defensive, earthbound and in space) can be considered.

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- The President would propose that the sides convene a negotiation later in the winter to begin working out a framework for negotiations that would deal with all of these issues.
- The President would make no specific suggestions or commitments and would agree to no moratoriums.
- The positive elements of this proposal in broader terms could be one theme of the President's address at the UN.
- From our standpoint, the bottom line is that the Soviets want the US not to build an ASAT and are deeply worried that they cannot compete with SDI. These developments, coupled with Soviet foreign and domestic problems and the US recovery, position the US as advantageously for successful arms control negotiations for the remainder of this decade as the Soviets were in the early 70s. But, we must not get impatient and must maintain a integral linkage between offensive and defensive systems. Above all, we must not accept one-sided limitations or moratoriums as a price to lure the Soviets back to the table or to "show progress".